



May 1, 2013

Hon. Leona Aglukkaq
House of Commons
458 Confederation Building
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

The Honourable Leona Aglukkaq:

My name is Dr. Karen Cohen, Chief Executive Officer at the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and I am interested in speaking to Minister Aglukkaq about improving access to psychological services. The Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) is the national association for the science, practice and education of psychology in Canada. With almost 7,000 members and affiliates, CPA is Canada's largest association for psychology.

In any given year, one in five people in Canada is living with a mental health problem or disorder with estimated costs to the economy of 51 billion dollars annually. Psychologists are the largest, regulated, specialized mental health care providers in the country outnumbering psychiatrists 4:1. However, the services of psychologists are not funded by provincial health insurance plans, which make them inaccessible to many Canadians with modest incomes or no insurance. Although there are some publically funded services available in Canada, these are often in short supply, wait lists are long and the criteria to access these services can be restrictive. As a result, the burden of mental health care surpasses the public health expenditure.

Other jurisdictions such as the United Kingdom, Australia, the Netherlands, and Finland have launched mental health initiatives which include covering the services of psychologists through the public health systems, particularly primary care. The Canadian Psychological Association commissioned a report by a group of health economists to develop the model for enhanced access to psychological services here in Canada. The report provides a business case for improved access to psychological services based on demonstrating positive return on investment (ROI) and proposed service that yields desired outcomes.

The CPA has put forward a number of workable solutions based on the findings of this report that we would like to bring to your attention. I will call your office next week to follow-up and hopefully schedule an appointment. In the meantime, please let me know if I can provide any additional information about the purpose of the meeting or be of any further assistance.

Thank you very much for considering this request. You can reach me at executiveoffice@cpa.ca or 613-237-2144 to follow up.